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THE NEW ENGLAND GRAMMAR SCHOOL, 1700-1800

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The dawn of the new century found the colonies wearied and exhausted by their fierce struggles in the establishment of homes, in conquering the wilderness and the savage. Life and religious liberty had proved costly. Yet new settlements were pushing out and out into untried sections, and the children were repeating the struggles of the fathers. Taxation in every form was a burden. The intellectual fiber of the English college-bred fathers had largely disappeared, though the firmness of purpose and narrowness of view still remained. The worth of the grammar school was not always recognized, and though the old law remained in force for the whole of this eighteenth century, and larger penalties were added to assist in the enforcement, and though presentments at court became frequent, the school did not flourish as fully as it might. Everywhere there was collision between the "outskirts" and the center, resulting finally in the formation of districts, and in many places there was the conflict between the advocates of the English schools and the grammar-school law.

The story in its details is interesting. In a previous article¹ the probable establishment of twenty-six grammar schools, and the possible or attempted establishment of eight others, were shown. Most of the twenty-six schools continued in growth and usefulness; some of the eight became well defined and distinct, though not without some difficulties.

Middlesex County, Massachusetts, had twenty towns in 1708, nine of which had more than one hundred families, and hence were required by law to maintain grammar schools. Only four had obeyed the law: Charlestown, Watertown, Cambridge, and Concord. Woburn, whose first attempt had been futile, presented a curious struggle during these years. In March, 1700,

¹ *School Review*, September, 1902.

a committee of three was chosen to inquire for, and treat with, some suitable person to keep a grammar school in the town, and occasionally to assist the Rev. Mr. Fox in the ministry; and to make report of their doings herein before they agreed with the man.

Nothing had been done since Mr. Carter's day; this committee did nothing. The town was presented at court, and in May of the same year a new committee was appointed "to agree with Sir Fox or any other gentleman upon as easy terms as they can." He was hired for four months upon trial at a salary of £9, and proved so satisfactory that he was re-engaged for a whole year at £28.

The Woburn school, then, began in 1700. At the end of the year the town refused to renew on the old terms. The new conditions were "£18 certain, and in case he should have more work in that place than he had last year, he should have forty shillings more." The school did not flourish. Schoolmasters were not easily found. At one time the committee consumed six weeks, traveling twice to Boston and twice to Cambridge, before finding one. In 1704 Mr. Dudley Bradstreet was in Woburn "at the time of the Charlestown Court," acting the part of temporary schoolmaster. He left town on the adjournment of the court, having had his expenses paid while there and receiving "eighteen shillings in silver for a gratuity."

In 1706 the town was again presented at court, but on entering a plea that they had been looking for a schoolmaster unsuccessfully, they were excused. The matter dragged until March, 1708, when the town ordered the selectmen "to provide one against the next court, which is the ninth current, if possible." Mr. John Tufts was engaged to begin March 8, "he to stay in Woburn one month from the said eighth day of March, and then come again when the town sends for him." This is clearly a court-dodging scheme, but he proved so popular a master that he was engaged for a full year, and it was stipulated that, as he must go into the various parts of the town, the people "find him a horse to ride to meeting on."

Further evasion is found in 1732, when an entry was made "to Mr. Ebenezer Flagg in full for keeping the grammar school in the year past, and standing in schoolmaster two courts, £13-10-0." From 1758 to 1770, however, the school had one master, Mr. John Fowle, noted for his Latin and his discipline. In 1760 he petitioned

for some additional allowance "in consideration of the fatigues he hath had by reason of so many removals." The petition was denied and never repeated.

Another of these towns, Sudbury, in 1701 chose Mr. Joseph Noyes "a grammar schoolmaster for one year." His certificate of approbation from the ministers was as follows:

We, the subscribers, being desired by the town of Sudbury to write what we could testify in concerning the justification of Mr. Joseph Noyes of Sudbury for a legal grammar schoolmaster, having examined the said Mr. Joseph Noyes, we find that he hath been considerably versed in the Latin and Greek tongues, and do think that upon his diligent revisal and recollection of what he hath formerly learned, he may be qualified to initiate and instruct the youth in the Latin tongue.

There was a grammar school from this time. In the 1740's it was kept "in the five remote corners of the town." In 1781 it was found again in the center of the town.

The other towns, Reading, Marlboro, and Billerica, did not maintain grammar schools, though Marlboro paid £7 in 1702 "for teaching our children and youth in reading, writing and casting accounts, and also in Latin, as occassion is, and in doing the duty of schoolmaster four months." There is no evidence that Latin was continued in this town.

The whole century is marked by indifference to, or open defiance of, the law. More and more the conviction is forced upon us that this form of school existed, not by popular will, but by force of law. After the school kept by Parson Wiswell was closed, Duxbury joined the delinquents, and in 1709 was fined "£5 for want of a schoolmaster." In 1731 Pelatiah West was chosen "to answer their presentment of said court for not being provided with a schoolmaster." In 1737 the town was again presented for not having a grammar schoolmaster. It is probable that a school was kept during some of these intervening years, for in 1741 the town voted that the school should "go round with the sun as it has been kept ever since the said town were provided with a grammar school," and in 1742 two men were chosen agents "to go down to the eastward" and see about the land which had been granted by the general court toward the support of the grammar school. Later this land was sold for £750, old tenor.

Braintree, after two generations of a grammar school, made an agreement with Mr. Benjamin Thompson "for an abiding school-

master, not exceeding £30 per annum in or as money, during the time he perform the work, until the present law referring to schools be repealed." Other grammar schools were attempted in these early years. Scituate in 1701 "agreed with Deacon David Jacobs to keep a reading, writing, and grammar school for one year;" and in 1711 the selectmen were ordered to provide "but one grammar school and that to be kept in the middle of the town and not to be removed."

In 1701 Andover voted to build a schoolhouse, and directed the selectmen "to employ a grammar schoolmaster from year to year." The school was not kept continuously, for the town was indicted in 1713, and the selectmen presented a long petition in which they recited their ineffectual efforts to obtain a master. The petition closed thus:

And we have no grammar school in our town as we know of, and we are now taking the best care we can for to obtain one, therefore we pray that we may be favored so far as may be, for we cannot compel gentlemen to come to us; and we do suppose they are something afraid by the reason we do lie so exposed to our Indian enemies.

Some of these difficulties were overcome a few years later, for in 1720 an agreement was made with Mr. James Bailey "to keep a grammar school for one year following for £44;" and in 1723 another master was engaged.

In 1700 Haverhill ordered a grammar school to be established, and appropriated £30 for that purpose; but nothing was done. In 1701 this record was made:

The question being moved by some of the inhabitants whether this town is obliged by law to be provided with a grammar schoolmaster, yea or no, the town answers in the negative and therefore do not proceed to do it, because they do not find they have the one hundred families or householders which the law mentions.

The next year their vision was sharpened by an indictment and fine, and the selectmen were ordered to get a schoolmaster "with all the speed they can," and one was engaged for £34. In 1711 a master was wanted "to move quarterly," but no one was found. As a general thing, the grammar schoolmasters objected to the moving school. In 1751 the town was again indicted for lack of a grammar school. The school was immediately re-established and was generally continued. In 1790 an elaborate series of rules was issued.

Haverhill's contention against the grammar-school law because of the lack of the full one hundred families was a common contention. When Malden was indicted in 1710, the householders' list was put in evidence, showing ninety-six families able to be taxed and seven too poor for taxes; and the record shows that "the Court do dismiss them for the present as to a grammar school." They were presented again in 1715 and in 1719, and were ordered to "provide themselves with a grammar schoolmaster by the next court;" and in 1720 Mr. Josiah Marshall "hath been approved of by two of the neighboring ministers as a person suitably qualified for such an office." Groton answered an indictment in 1718 by a petition from the selectmen. Among other arguments they pleaded that "there are not one hundred families in the town." Medfield in 1722 was presented for not maintaining a grammar school, and the selectmen in their reply stated:

And as for the number of householders or families in our town referring to a grammar school, indeed in former years we had such a number of families and had a grammar school some years before Medway was taken from us.

They further pleaded:

But now our town falleth short considerably of one hundred householders or families. . . . We have reckoned up all the families in the town and find but ninety-four families.

The court did not accept the plea, a school was established the next year, and the selectmen reported to the justices that they had procured a grammar schoolmaster "with submission to your wise determination." In 1760, when the town was divided into three districts, it was voted, "any of the inhabitants of each district to have liberty to send any child to the grammar school in the middle district to learn the Latin tongue and the mathematical arts."

Towns in the succeeding years showed more solicitude in evading fines than in founding grammar schools. Worcester, in 1740, voted:

That the sum of £100 be granted for the support of the schools in the town for the year ensuing, £50 whereof to be applied towards keeping a grammar school in the present school house; the other £50 to be divided equally among the quarters or skirts as usual, provided the body of the town keep a grammar school the year and save the town from presentment.

In 1752 a vote required "the inhabitants of the center district, extending one mile and a half around the center, to keep a grammar school

the whole year." John Adams, afterward President, was the master from 1755 to 1758. His diary for 1756 gives an illustration of the dislike Latin masters had for the moving school. He says: "Engaged to keep school at Bristol, provided Worcester people at their ensuing March meeting should change this into a moving school, not otherwise." The school was grudgingly maintained. In 1766 the opposition took the form of instructions to the representative to the general court:

That the law for keeping of Latin grammar schools be repealed and that we be not obliged to keep more than one in a county and that to be kept at the county charge.

In 1767 the instructions gained in vigor and directness:

That you use your endeavors to relieve the people of the province from the great burden of supporting so many Latin grammar schools, whereby they are prevented from attaining such a degree of English learning as is necessary to retain the freedom of any state.

In 1769 a committee was appointed

to treat with the proprietors of the grammar school in town and to agree with them upon what terms they will allow said school to be considered as the town grammar school.

An agreement was made for £6 a year, "said proprietors engaging that the said grammar school shall be free for all persons in said town desirous of learning the languages." In the town warrant for 1785 was an article,

to see what the town will do with regard to a presentment for not keeping a grammar school, also to see what the town will do in regard to keeping a grammar school for the future.

The second part only received consideration, on which it was voted that the selectmen be a committee to confer with the proprietors of the grammar school now keeping in this town, to see if they can agree with them so the town may be exempt from paying a fine for the future.

The next year instructions to the representative were introduced into the town-meeting and barely defeated. They showed the temper of the people, however. They read:

That you endeavor to have the law repealed which obliges each town to keep a grammar school at the expense of the town, as we think it a burden to be obliged to hire and pay a grammar master when the town at large receives no advantage thereby.

In 1788 the town treasurer was directed to pay a fine imposed for not keeping a grammar school. In 1799 the school became a moving school under this vote: "That the grammar school in future be kept as a moving school until otherwise ordered."

The Worcester records have been given thus *in extenso*, because they are typical. The inland towns, covering large areas, sparsely settled, even when they reached the one hundred families, could not afford to maintain a grammar school for the few. It was too heavy a burden. Petitions to the general court for assistance in the way of land grants were frequent. Groton in 1734 furnishes a good example:

The town taking into consideration the obligations they are under by law of the province, to be constantly provided with a grammar school, and their poverty and inability to support the same, "petitioned" for a tract of land, the profits and produce of which to be applied and approved for or towards the support of a grammar school in this town.

Her history shows a moving school, an indictment, a school "in the middle of the town," another indictment, and so on in this struggle between ability, desire, and the law.

Mendon in 1709 made this record:

Whereas a schoolmaster is wanting to teach the children to read, write and cypher as the law directs, and Mr. Rawson [the minister] offering the town that if the town would retain a Latin schoolmaster for four years, he would give said schoolmaster his board all the said time, therefore voted that the town accept the said offer and do resolve to retain a Latin schoolmaster for said town for four years, and to give £20 a year for the service.

There is no record to show if this vote was carried into effect. If carried into effect, it did not win its way into the affections of the town, for in 1721 William Boyce was elected schoolmaster to keep a "reading and writing school during the year, unless the town should be presented for want of a grammar school." A similar spirit is found in a vote of 1786, "that the selectmen provide a grammar school so far as to clear the town from any fine." Both generations showed greater zeal in escaping the fine than in maintaining the school.

Presentments were common, but not effective. Weymouth was presented for not having a grammar school as late as 1785. Newton in 1762 was presented "for not setting up a grammar school," though

the town had voted the year previous "that the grammar school be kept at the house of Edward Durant." Amesbury in 1717 appointed a special committee to hire a grammar schoolmaster. Five years later the town was presented for not having such a schoolmaster, and Deacon John Tewksbury went to Ipswich to answer in court. In 1757 there was another presentment, and again in 1778. Grammar schools were probably maintained intermittently between these dates. Hardwick was presented in 1747, and not fined; in 1758, and paid costs; in 1767, and was fined £8-6-8. In 1785 it was voted "to have the grammar school kept in four parts of the town so long as will clear the town of a fine." Harwich in 1720 voted to establish a grammar school, but the next year it was "voted to give Mr. Philip Selew £50 to keep school this year, provided he will pay one half what the town shall be liable to pay if fined for want of a grammar school." This would indicate non-compliance with the law and with the vote of the previous year, and that the existing school was an English school. Framingham was presented in 1717, and a committee was appointed to find a schoolmaster, but they reported the following year that they "had used the utmost diligence but could find no man to be had as yet." Later another committee was appointed to visit a Mr. Goddard and "see upon what terms he will serve the town as schoolmaster for a year; and if he will serve as cheap or something cheaper than another, then they are to make a bargain with him for a full year." This policy resulted in varying schools, with its accompanying presentments and fines.

Wherever these schools existed, there seems to have been a placating spirit as manifested in the moving school. The mountain was moved to Mahomet. Sometimes it was moved around with the sun; sometimes it was located in the neighborhood of prominent citizens, sometimes geographically, sometimes in convenient centers; generally the amount of time for any locality was elaborately figured out according to the money paid by that section, even to the fraction of a day. Weston records contain many items like these: "voted that they will not keep the grammar school in more than three places in said town for the future," and "that the grammar school be kept in the four quarters of this town only." Falmouth in 1763 chose

a committee "to open a grammar school and procure a teacher, moving the school from place to place so as to give all parts the benefit." Districts were formed in North Brookfield in 1763, but it was voted that "any such remote taxpayer whose son inclines to learn the tongues other than the English, may have liberty at the middle school, they having a grammar schoolmaster." Manchester in 1765 voted "£50 for a grammar school, the people at Cittle Cove to draw their proportion of said £50 for a school at the Cove and to have no benefit of the school in the middle of the town." Chelsea was set off from Boston in 1738, and the second town meeting voted "to continue the grammar school provided any persons appeared to make up the difference of charge between a grammar and writing school." There is nothing in the Boston records to indicate that Chelsea had ever had a grammar school, and yet this item says "continue." The vote of the next year seems to show that someone paid the difference, for it was then voted

not to continue the grammar school; but inasmuch as some person may make up the surplus charge between a grammar and writing school, voted to defer the consideration of a school till next meeting, and that the selectmen be desired to take any such subscriptions and report at next meeting.

At the next meeting there was nothing done about a grammar school, and it was not mentioned again in the records until 1769, when it was voted "to have a grammar school and that the school be kept by the direction of the selectmen."

New Hampshire was the only New England state besides Massachusetts that endeavored to maintain the grammar school. When she passed out from Massachusetts control in 1680, the law of that state for 1647 was adopted as the law for the new province, and under it two grammar schools were probably established before 1700. Presumably they did not flourish, for in 1708 the following act was passed:

That a Latin school be kept at Portsmouth in the said Province; and that the schoolmaster from time to time be appointed by his Excellency, Council and settled ministers of the town; and that the said schoolmaster be paid by the several towns within this Province, the sum of £50 money per annum, besides what the selectmen of Portsmouth shall order to be paid by each of those inhabitants that send their children to learn Latin; and to be a free school for writers, readers and

Latinists; and the several sums to be paid by each town are as follows, viz.: Portsmouth £28, Hampton £8, Dover £6, Exeter £6, and Newcastle £2; and that this act continue two years.

Later in the year the council learned that no schoolhouse had been provided by the town, and it was immediately

Ordered, That the selectmen of the town of Portsmouth be notified of their neglect herein, and that they forthwith provide a suitable house for the said school to be kept, that the schools may not lose their time, within three days next coming, upon the penalty of £50, to be levied upon their persons and estates as other fines, to be brought through the treasury to be expended in building a good schoolhouse for the future service, that the aforesaid good and religious act of the Assembly be not evaded or eluded.

In 1712 the council sent for Mr. Daniel Ringe, who was discoursed relating to his taking up to be schoolmaster in the town of Portsmouth to teach Latin, writing and cyphering. . . . and the said Daniel Ringe having acquainted this Board he is willing to settle himself for four years a schoolmaster of the said town of Portsmouth. Agreeable therefore to the said act, the Council and minister aforesaid, have appointed the said Daniel Ringe to be schoolmaster of the said town of Portsmouth for four years, and to receive £50 per annum, as mentioned in the act aforesaid.

This did not solve the difficulty, for in 1717 this record was made:

Whereas the selectmen of Portsmouth have complained to this house that their town now lies under a presentment for want of schools in the town; voted that the selectmen be empowered to call and agree with two schoolmasters for the town of Portsmouth, the one for Latin, the other for reading and writing and cyphering, and settle them as may be most beneficial for the town at their discretion.

In 1719 a new law reiterated that when any town or towns shall have the number of one hundred families or householders, there shall be a grammar school set up and kept in every such town, and some discreet person of good conversation, well instructed in the tongues, shall be procured to be master thereof, and every such schoolmaster to be suitably encouraged and paid by the inhabitants.

The penalty was made £20 for each six months of neglect, and the selectmen were authorized to employ the schoolmasters. In 1721, to focus the neglect a little more sharply, the penalty was made payable for one month's neglect, and the selectmen were made personally responsible. There was also in the law a clause allowing towns that felt themselves unable to comply with its terms to

seek relief from the Court of General Sessions. These modifications of the Massachusetts law made the struggle in New Hampshire of a somewhat different form, though the aim and end were the same.

There was a generally good school spirit in the various towns, but limitations of locations and other circumstances often rendered a central grammar school of little service to many of the people. There were many requests for relief made to the Court of General Sessions. Two petitions, two generations apart, will sufficiently show the arguments used. The first was presented in 1722:

The humble petition of the representatives for the Township of Dover in behalf of said town, humbly sheweth:

That whereas the said town is one of the most exposed towns in this Province to the insults of the Indian enemy, and also whereas by an act of the General Assembly of this Province the said town of Dover (amongst others) is obliged by said act to keep and maintain a grammar school, and whereas the circumstances and situation or settlements of the inhabitants of said town lying and being in such manner as it is, the houses being so scattered over the whole township that in no one place six houses are within call, by which inconveniency the inhabitants of said town can have no benefit of such grammar school, for at the times fit for children to go and come from schools, is generally the chief time of the Indians doing mischief, so the inhabitants are afraid to send their children to school, and the children dare not venture, so that the salary to said schoolmaster is wholly lost to said town.

So that your petitioners at the request and in behalf of said town, humbly pray your honorable and general Assembly that there may be an act of this General Assembly passed, that the said town of Dover may be exempted from keeping a grammar school during the war with the Indians as formerly they were. So pray your humble petitioners.

The other petition was from the town of Wilton in 1788:

The petition of us, the subscribers, humbly sheweth: That a law of this state, entitled an act for the settlement and support of grammar schools, obliges every town of the state, consisting of one hundred families, to maintain yearly a grammar school, and for every month's neglect, imposing a fine of £10. That the town of Wilton, several years last past, has made peculiar provision for the instruction of its youth. It has employed from the seat of the muses several well-accomplished young gentlemen, and some aged experienced gentlemen of literary accomplishment, for the space of twenty years last past, and it has expended for a number of years upon schooling £80, and sometimes it has assessed more, at least a sum sufficient to support her two grammar schools annually. Apprehending the end of law, in general, to be the interest and happiness of its subjects, and the end of the school laws, in particular, to be the good education of

youth, we presumed a compliance with the spirit of this law would atone for a small deviation from the letter, especially as this deviation has facilitated the progress of our youth and gratified the wishes of their parents and guardians.

The town of Wilton with this view of the matter, and from the view of its local situation—mountainous land, long winters, deep snows, inhabitants scattered, town divided by a rapid stream rendering a passage to its center at some seasons of the year inconvenient and impracticable—from a view of public expenses, the scarcity of specie, the inability of the people to provide necessary schooling in the extreme parts, while obliged to support a grammar school in the center, our annual expense for the support of a number of bridges over rapid streams, building a convenient and decent house for public worship, the charge of which is not entirely settled, the importance of the labor of our youth and of their being instructed in agriculture and the manual arts; voted, to raise sufficient money to support two grammar schools, to divide the town into as many districts as was convenient, and to appoint committees in each district to see that the money was faithfully improved in the instruction of their youth. This method of education we have found by many years' experience, very beneficial. The state of learning of Wilton sufficiently evinces the expediency of it. Notwithstanding, one month preceding the General Session of the peace in the County of Hillsboro in Sept. last past, being destitute of a grammar school, the Grand Jury found a bill against the selectmen and they were accordingly cited to appear. Though the Sessions were convinced we had adopted a more advantageous method of education than we should have practised had we adhered to the letter of the law, yet the penalty of that law being absolute, they could not acquit us or lessen the fine. We therefore pray your honorables for leave to bring in a bill acquitting us from mulct imposed on us by the General Sessions. Apprehending from experience that the method of education we have adopted might be beneficial to many towns, we beg leave to suggest, without presuming to dictate, and with humble deference to your honor's authority and distinguished abilities, the possibilities of advantage to the public by a revisal of the aforesaid law, and as in duty bound will ever pray.

This petition was supported by two certificates, one from Mr. Josiah Burge, a teacher, and the other from Mr. Abel Fisk, the minister. Mr. Burge said:

I am happy to certify that the youth of Wilton are in general very good readers, writers and cypherers. They are further advanced in learning than those of most towns in the County, within the compass of my knowledge, who have maintained grammar schools, and inferior to none with which I am acquainted. I believe I might safely affirm that there is no other town in the state, of the same ability, that can produce so many youth so well qualified for common business, so well accomplished in all the branches of learning which are essentially useful, in every department of life, as can the town of Wilton.

Mr. Fisk made this statement:

Having made it my annual practice to call the youth together in different parts of the town, to advise and instruct them, I have taken occasion to examine them in respect to the improvement they have made in reading, and have been highly pleased with the accuracy and propriety exhibited in that branch of literature.

I have likewise been present at school when the children have been examined respecting the names and uses of those stops and characters that are made use of in the English language, and they have answered the questions proposed, to admiration. I have seen their writing, etc. and it appears to me, from the observations I have made, that the people of Wilton have paid particular attention to the school education of their children.

A committee was appointed to consider this petition, and in a few days they reported:

That although the town of Wilton have not strictly adhered to the letter of the law, yet it appears to your committee they have been at great expense for the education of their youth, and that it is the opinion of the committee that the fine be remitted and that they have leave to bring a bill accordingly.

This report was accepted, and the town received relief.

In 1727 Londonderry, because of her infancy, and because she furnished two schools for reading and writing, was exempted from the law for a year, and this was afterward extended to two years. Seven years later the town voted: "There shall be three schools, one of which shall be a grammar school, the others English schools, the grammar master to go from one school to another." In 1739 the town gave Rev. Matthew Clark a special salary "on condition of his keeping the town from employing any other grammar schoolmaster." The towns generally avoided supporting a grammar school as long as they could, and often preferred to pay the fine. Hollis in 1768 voted that if they were complained of, they would pay the fine, and they passed a similar vote during the Revolutionary War. New Boston, in 1788, voted "to hire a grammar schoolmaster for a year as cheap as they can and the said schoolmaster shall pass an examination." New Ipswich tried for a number of years to avoid the expense of such a school, and annually voted "to indemnify the selectmen if they should be fined for not providing one." Finally in 1771 it was voted to have a school during nine months of the year, but at the same time they voted "to hold the selectmen harmless if they did not have one."

Chester in 1751 voted "to defend and secure the selectmen from any damage they may come at for not providing a grammar school." Five years later this article appeared in the town warrant: "To see what the town will do concerning hiring a grammar schoolmaster for the year 1756, it being an express from the Court by the Grand Juryman to the selectmen." It was voted

that the present selectmen shall take care, and if they can, provide a grammar schoolmaster for the town so as to fulfil and answer the intents of the law, and if they cannot obtain one then they are fully empowered to address the Court in behalf of and in favor of the town on that account and at the charge of said town.

The second article for the town meeting in 1760 called attention to the fact that the selectmen were in danger of presentment for not providing the school, and asked the town to secure them from the threatened fine. This the town refused to do. In 1771 they were fined £10 and costs.

Weare began a school in 1772, but it was not long continued, being dropped during the Revolutionary War. In 1784 the town voted not to have a grammar school, and also agreed to pay all costs and fines if the selectmen were indicted. Three years later they were presented and given the usual fine. The town immediately voted "to pay all the costs and save the selectmen harmless." But the selectmen petitioned the court for a remission of the fine because of the scattered condition of the town, and because they believed several masters to teach English would do the town more good. This was their excuse for not having a grammar school. It was accepted, and the fine was remitted.

New Hampshire was rather more lenient and human in the enforcement of the school law than Massachusetts. She recognized that local conditions often rendered it inoperative, and she preferred to have good English schools reaching all the children, to having one school feeding only a few. The growth into the district school in this state was an easy transition from the letter of the law to the possibilities of localities.

In Connecticut, besides the four county grammar schools and the two at Windsor and Farmington, none seem to have been established. The law of 1700 ordered English schools for all the year in towns of seventy families, and for one half-year where there were

less. The laws of 1712 and 1717, placing the schools in the care of the parishes, minimized still further the probabilities of increasing the grammar schools. The law of 1776, allowing towns and parishes to divide into districts, to make their own regulations, and to draw their own school money, fastened the district-school system upon this state earlier than upon any other in New England. The grammar-school idea did not flourish here. It was like wheat falling upon stony ground; it had no root and withered away. It was not mentioned in the town records after the earliest settlements.

In Massachusetts the law of 1647 ordered that any town having one hundred families should establish a grammar school, with a penalty of £5 for non-performance of this legal duty. This penalty was afterward increased to £10, and still later to £20, if the town had two hundred families, while one of five hundred families was required to maintain two grammar schools and two writing schools. This continued in force until the law of 1789 lessened the burden. Meantime the term "grammar school" had practically disappeared from use, the district-school growth had taken away the central authority, the old form of school had become forgotten, and there was fastened upon this state the district-school system, which required fifty years of strenuous effort to dislodge. The grammar school had practically disappeared from New England at the end of the eighteenth century.